

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 07465 082315Z
ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T GUATEMALA 7465

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 11/8/85 (ORTIZ, FRANK V.) OR-M
TAGS: UNGA, PINT, GT, BH
SUBJ: US VOTE ON BELIZE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

REF: STATE 290413

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. PRESIDENT LUCAS RECEIVED ME AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 7. HE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AS I READ THE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL. HE AGREED GUATEMALA'S ISOLATION WAS NEVER MORE EVIDENT. NEVERTHELESS THE PRESIDENT THEN SAID BE BELIEVED THE CURRENT IMPASSE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM RE BELIZE COULD BE SALUTORY. ELECTIONS IN BELIZE ARE DUE SOON. HE BELIEVES THE OPPOSITION WILL WIN. THE OPPOSITION KNOWS THAT INDEPENDENCE IS NOT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR BELIZE UNLESS THE UK OR SOME OTHER COUNTRY WILL SUBSIDIZE THE COUNTRY PERMANENTLY. AS IT IS NOW THE UK SUBSIDIZES THE HEAVY UNEMPLOYMENT IN BELIZE THROUGH UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS. AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE COULD NOT DO SO. THE PRESIDENT SAID THE COMMUNISTS IN GUATEMALA AND ABROAD DO NOT CONCEAL THAT THEY ARE VERY MUCH IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE FOR BELIZE. AN

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INDEPENDENT BELIZE WILL FALL EASY PREY TO THE CUBANS. THAT IS WHAT WORRIES GUATEMALA.

3. NEVERTHELESS DESPITE THE PROVISION IN GUATEMALA'S CONSTITUTION WHICH MAKES BELIZE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY, GUATEMALA FOR MANY YEARS SEEKS A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT. HE SAID DURING HIS RECENT MEETING WITH

PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO, MEXICO URGED AN URGENT SOLUTION TO THE MATTER. PRESIDENT LUCAS REPLIED THAT HE BELIEVED A "DECOROUS" WAY OUT OF THE PROBLEM COULD BE FOUND. GUATEMALA WOULD BE READY TO RECOGNIZE BELIZE'S INDEPENDENCE PROVIDED THERE WERE SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES THAT BELIZE WOULD NOT GO COMMUNIST. HE SAID GUATEMALA WOULD ACCEPT A STRIP OF TERRITORY SOUTH OF TOLEDO. THIS WOULD ASSURE THAT GUATEMALA AND BELIZE COULD REMAIN CLOSE FRIENDS. HE SAID THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY EXTENDING CREDITS TO THE FARMERS IN THE TOLEDO AREA WHO ARE LARGELY OF GUATEMALAN ORIGIN. THE PRESIDENT SAID GUATEMALA COULD GET ALONG WITH A LINDO GOVERNMENT.

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE REALIZED IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR THE US TO ABSTAIN ON THE BELIZE RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, OUR ABSTENTION CONTRIBUTED TO THE STABILITY OF THE REGION IN TROUBLED TIMES.

5. THE PRESIDENT SAID THE REPORTS CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUATEMALA WHICH ARE ACCEPTED ABROAD WERE MOST OFTEN EXAGGERATED OR UNTRUE. HE REFERRED TO THE CASE OF A YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT ARRESTED FOR THE ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF A CHURCH. THERE WERE REPORTS SPREAD OF POLICE BRUTALITY WHICH WERE VERIFIED UNTRUE. HE SAID HE HOPES FOR MORE OBJECTIVITY AND EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION HERE. I AGAIN MENTIONED THE FUENTES MOHR AND COLOM ARGUETA ASSASSINATIONS. HE REPLIED THAT I ALREADY HAD HIS EXPLANATION OF THOSE EVENTS (GUATEMALA 6616) WHICH TOOK PLACE MANY MONTHS AGO AND WHICH HAD NOT BEEN
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REPEATED.

6. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT'S RESTATEMENT OF THE GUATEMALAN PROPOSAL ACCEPTING A COMPARATIVELY SMALL STRIP OF TERRITORY IN THE SOUTHERN TIP OF BELIZE SEEMS SIGNIFICANT TO US. THE PRESIDENT ALSO MADE IT A POINT TO SAY THAT BELIZE WAS A DOUBLE-EDGED PROBLEM FOR GUATEMALA. HE POINTED OUT THE MILITARY INSTITUTION HAS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO PRESS FOR SOME RECOGNITION OF WHAT HE TERMS GUATEMALA'S LEGITIMATE CLAIM.
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